

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION IN DELIVERING MESSAGES TO GENERATION Z IN THE COUNSELING PROCESS

(A Study of Family Planning Counselors in Tanggamus Regency, Lampung)

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of the digital era has significantly influenced social activities, particularly in information and communication technology, which now encompasses visual, audio, and audiovisual formats. Family Planning Counselors serve as the frontline representatives of the National Population and Family Planning Board, and their counseling activities must adapt creatively to current trends to effectively engage their target audience. Conventional communication methods have proven less effective and appealing to Generation Z, who perceive them as monotonous and unengaging. Thus, this study aims to explore the effectiveness of digital communication in delivering messages to Generation Z.

This research applies the conventional-interactional theory as a framework. Data collection techniques include field observations, interviews with key informants, and documentation of research findings. The results indicate that digital communication surpasses traditional methods in terms of communication design, message quality, time efficiency, and overcoming spatial limitations. Through digital platforms, Family Planning Counselors can deliver messages more effectively on a large scale, aligning with the evolving preferences and technological familiarity of Generation Z.

Keywords: Digital Communication; Generation Z; Information Technology; Message.

INTRODUCTION

From birth, humans have naturally engaged in communication, a process that continues throughout their lives. Communication is as essential as the lifeblood of human interaction, involving various aspects and serving many functions. Through communication, individuals can convey their thoughts and emotions to others, either directly or indirectly, allowing for connection and understanding. It is an inherent part of human life, forming the foundation for social interaction and information exchange.

Communication can be broadly defined as a process of exchanging information between the communicator and the recipient, leading to specific effects. Referring to Harold Lasswell's well-known paradigm: "Who Says What in Which Channel to Whom with What Effect?" This framework highlights that communication consists of five key elements: the communicator, the message, the medium, the recipient, and the effect. Thus, Lasswell's paradigm emphasizes that effective communication is a structured process where the communicator transmits a message via a chosen medium to an intended recipient, resulting in certain desired outcomes (Efendi et al., 2024).

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In the current digital era, both the actors and processes of communication must adapt to evolving technologies and trends. Choosing the right media has become crucial for effective message delivery, especially as audiences are increasingly consuming content through digital platforms. The transition from traditional media to digital channels has changed the landscape of communication, requiring more dynamic and responsive approaches to meet the needs of a technologically-savvy audience.

Family Planning Counselors play a significant role as field officers under the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN). Their main responsibilities include conducting Communication, Information, and Education (CIE) activities related to the Family Development, Population, and Family Planning Program (BANGGA KENCANA). Using appropriate CIE media is essential for these counselors to achieve the goals of their communication efforts, which include informing, entertaining, educating, and persuading communities at the village and urban levels. The choice of media directly impacts the effectiveness of the communication process.

With time, the focus of CIE activities by Family Planning Counselors has expanded to include a younger demographic—Generation Z, or "Gen Z." This generation, born between 1995 and 2010, has grown up in an era marked by rapid technological advancements. Generation Z is characterized by their quick adoption and frequent use of digital technology, making them a unique audience for CIE activities. Understanding their preferences is essential for developing effective communication strategies that resonate with their behaviors and media consumption patterns.

In the context of digital communication, Generation Z prefers accessing information through online platforms and social media. This trend aligns with modern communication systems that increasingly rely on new media to convey digital messages effectively. To capture the interest of this generation, Family Planning Counselors must employ creative and innovative methods in their CIE activities. The shift towards digital communication offers new opportunities but also poses challenges that require strategic adaptation by the counselors.

A relevant study conducted by Sudinta and Irwanyah (2022), titled "Analysis of the Effectiveness of Digital Communication as a Communication Medium during the COVID-19 Pandemic," provides insight into the advantages of digital communication. The study found that digital communication excels in terms of time efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and flexibility of location. However, it also highlighted challenges such as limited internet access in remote areas and issues related to data quota availability and stakeholder involvement, which may hinder the effectiveness of digital initiatives.

This current study explores the Effectiveness of Digital Communication in Delivering Messages to Generation Z within the context of CIE activities. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the benefits of digital communication to support the CIE process effectively. Data collection methods included field observations, interviews, and documentation of activities involving Family Planning Counselors in Tanggamus Regency, Lampung. The findings from this research are intended to provide valuable reference material for Family Planning Counselors and Field Officers, helping them optimize their roles and duties in the digital age.

The objective of this study is to describe the effectiveness of digital communication strategies in engaging with Generation Z. By examining the use of digital platforms in CIE activities, this research aims to inform future practices and offer new insights for improving communication efforts targeted at this technologically-driven generation.

METHOD

The research approach in this study utilized a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Through the qualitative method, the researcher analyzed narratives based on detailed responses

from participants and explored solutions to the situations they experienced. This descriptive approach was employed to systematically observe, describe, and interpret the data, enabling the collection of clear and factual information.

The study was conducted in June 2024 at the Secretariat of the Branch Leadership Council of the Indonesian Family Planning Counselor Association (DPC IPeKB) located at Letnan Mursani Street, Number 02 Banjar Negeri, Gunung Alip Subdistrict, Tanggamus Regency, Lampung.

Data Source

The primary data used in this study were obtained directly from the respondents in the field through an in-depth interview technique and question-answer, with sample respondents of Family Planning Counselors and/or Family Planning Field Officers in Tanggamus Regency, Lampung. Another data source was secondary data obtained from the researcher from online reading references of articles related to this study. Thus, secondary data was used to support and equip primary data in this study.

Determining Informants

Determining informants was carried out using a purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique was non-random, where subjects of the study were selected based on certain considerations (Effendy, 2015). Determining informants was carried out by considering the specific criteria for Family Planning Counselors and/or Family Planning Field Officers required in this study as follows: (1) Vice Chairman of DPC IPeKB Indonesia of Tanggamus Regency, (2) Head of Competence and Welfare Division, (3) Head of Public Relations, Media, and CIE, (4) Social Media Manager, (5) Outstanding Family Planning Counselor of Tanggamus Regency 2024.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques used by the researcher in this study are through 3 (three) data collection methods as follows:

1. Observation

According to Nasution (Sugiyono, 2014), observation is the basis of all science. Through the observation technique, the researcher could conduct direct observation in the field, where the researcher focused on the observation of the effectiveness of digital communication in the Bangga Kencana Program counseling activities to Generation Z. Observation was also conducted on digital CIE media that have been used by Family Planning Counselor and/or Family Planning Field Officers of Tanggamus Regency.

2. Interview

An interview is a technique commonly used in a qualitative approach. Through this study, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with predetermined informants by recording the results of interviews and/or recording in the form of audio/video. The interview questions were structured systematically without reducing the informants' freedom of opinion.

3. Documentation

According to Guba and Lincoln (Mamik, 2015), documentation is any written or filmed material that is not prepared at the request of a researcher. In this data collection, the researcher collected the documentation required and supported this study.

Data Analysis Technique

Basically, data analysis is the process of simplifying data to make it easier to read and interpret. The data will be analyzed in a simpler form to further seek broader meaning and implications from the results of the study (Wardiyanta in Samaji, 2015).

Data obtained in this study were analyzed using descriptive analysis and SWOT analysis. The descriptive analysis method was used to determine the supporting and inhibiting factors of the effectiveness of digital communication in delivering messages to Generation Z. Moreover, SWOT analysis was used to analyze strategies for developing the effectiveness of digital communication through opportunities and various supporting factors in the field.

1. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is one of the problem-solving methods by describing a subject or object of the study with the facts that emerge (Soejono and Abdurrahman in Pradikta, 2013). The descriptive analysis in this study was used to obtain the description of supporting factors and inhibiting factors of the effectiveness of digital communication in delivering messages to Generation Z.

2. SWOT Analysis

SWOT is an abbreviation for Strengths and Weaknesses of the internal environment and Opportunities and Threats of the external environment in the business sector (Rangkuti, 2014). This study used the SWOT analysis method to determine strategies for developing the effectiveness of digital communication through internal factors, strengths and weaknesses, and external factors, opportunities and threats.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were obtained from direct observation of informants using in-depth interviews. In this section, the researcher presented the results of interviews with informants and discussed in more detail the effectiveness of digital communication.

In determining the informants, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique, where informants were selected according to certain considerations. Informants of this study consisted of 5 informants who were Family Planning Counselors and/or Family Planning Field Officers in Tanggamus Regency. The following are the identities of informants taken by a researcher from the results of interviews:

Table 1 Identities of Research's Informants.

Num.	Name	Description
1.	Achmad Rizki Agriyansyah S. S.ST.	Vice Chairman of IPeKB of Tanggamus Regency
2.	Afriadi, A.Md.	Competence and Welfare Division
3.	Dwi Septiana, S. Sos.	Public Relations, Media, and CIE Division
4.	Chandra Gautama SH CK, A.Md.	Social Media Manager
5.	Nurul Amanah, S.Pd.	Outstanding Family Planning Counselor

Source: Primary Data of the Study.

Informants involved in this study were interviewed through direct/face-to-face communication. There are 5 points of questions asked by the researcher to informants:

Question 1: In your opinion, are conventional CIE media still effective as a CIE media option in this current era? Example: Leaflet, Banner, Wall Magazine, etc.

Table 2 Informants' Answer to Question 1.

Num.	Name	Answer
1.	Achmad Rizki Agriyansyah S. S.ST.	<i>Less effective for Gen-Z targets.</i>
2.	Afriadi, A.Md.	<i>Not really effective.</i>
3.	Dwi Septiana, S. Sos.	<i>The use of conventional CIE media is still effective as CIE media if it is addressed to the right targets who still access conventional media.</i>
4.	Chandra Gautama SH CK, A.Md.	<i>Yes. It depends on the targets.</i>
5.	Nurul Amanah, S.Pd.	<i>It is still effective, although not as effective as digital CIE media, because, in the current Gen Z era, almost all means of communication use digital media.</i>

Source: Primary Data of the Study.

Question 2: How often do you use Digital CIE Media in the Bangga Kencana Counseling Program, and why do you prefer Digital CIE Media?

Table 3 Informants' Answer to Question 2.

Num.	Name	Answer
1.	Achmad Rizki Agriyansyah S. S.ST.	<i>It is often because digital CIE media is more easily accessible and able to reach more people.</i>
2.	Afriadi, A.Md.	<i>It is often because digital CIE media can be more easily understood by people.</i>
3.	Dwi Septiana, S. Sos.	<i>It is often because it explains more important points and is easy to disseminate.</i>
4.	Chandra Gautama SH CK, A.Md.	<i>It is more often because it has a wider reach and is quickly accepted by the targets.</i>
5.	Nurul Amanah, S.Pd.	<i>It is quite often.</i>

Source: Primary Data of the Study.

Question 3: In your opinion, is Digital CIE Media effective for use with current adolescent targets (Gen Z) in the Bangga Kencana Counseling Program?

Table 4 Informants' Answer to Question 3.

Num.	Name	Answer
1.	Achmad Rizki Agriyansyah S. S.ST.	<i>It is really effective because unique digital CIE media will make adolescents interested in watching.</i>
2.	Afriadi, A.Md.	<i>Really effective.</i>
3.	Dwi Septiana, S. Sos.	<i>Yes, it is really effective.</i>
4.	Chandra Gautama SH CK, A.Md.	<i>Really effective. Because Gen-Z mostly uses smartphones to communicate.</i>
5.	Nurul Amanah, S.Pd.	<i>Really effective.</i>

Source: Primary Data of the Study

Question 4: What are the strengths and opportunities of Digital CIE Media as a counseling media option for Family Planning Counselors?

Table 5 Informants' Answer to Question 4.

Num.	Name	Answer
1.	Achmad Rizki Agriyansyah S. S.ST.	<i>Digital media can reach many people, and anybody can use it easily and quickly.</i>
2.	Afriadi, A.Md.	<i>It is easier to deliver and is accepted by targets.</i>
3.	Dwi Septiana, S. Sos.	<i>It is more effective in its creation, more interesting for targets, and easier to disseminate.</i>
4.	Chandra Gautama SH CK, A.Md.	<i>It has a wider target reach.</i>
5.	Nurul Amanah, S.Pd.	<i>Because in the digital era, all information uses digital media.</i>

Source: Primary Data of the Study.

Question 5: What are the weaknesses and constraints of Digital CIE Media as a counseling media option for Family Planning Counselors?

Table 6 Informants' Answer to Question 5.

Num.	Name	Answer
1.	Achmad Rizki Agriyansyah S. S.ST.	<i>The internet network is not evenly distributed, so it makes it difficult for people in some areas to access digital CIE media.</i>
2.	Afriadi, A.Md.	<i>The limited and poor quality of internet networks in remote areas.</i>
3.	Dwi Septiana, S. Sos.	<i>Not all family planning counselors are technology literate in the use of digital CIE media.</i>
4.	Chandra Gautama SH CK, A.Md.	<i>It can only be seen briefly.</i>
5.	Nurul Amanah, S.Pd.	<i>There are several parties or targets that do not use digital media.</i>

Source: Primary Data of the Study.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews with 5 (five) informants regarding the effectiveness of digital communication in delivering messages to Generation Z above, a SWOT analysis was then carried out, which was supported by the theory of aspects of effectiveness.

1. Strength

Internal supporting factors for the effectiveness of digital communication in delivering messages to Generation Z are the strengths of current new media. New media is flexible, whereas, in this case, it is CIE media that uses the Internet/digital. New media is easy for targets to access without any space and time limitations.

2. Weaknesses

Internal inhibiting factors for the effectiveness of digital communication in delivering messages to Generation Z require the facilitation of supporting devices. The effectiveness of digital communication will be reduced if one party and/or both the communicator and

recipient do not have devices/gadgets that support the application of digital communication in the counseling process and there is a lack of technology literacy among the human resources involved in this activity.

3. Opportunities

External supporting factors for the effectiveness of digital communication in delivering messages to Generation Z are opportunities obtained from the current digital era and the demands of Generation Z. It cannot be denied that technology is increasingly developing year by year, and the number of Gen Z is growing year by year. It is an opportunity for digital communication media to have a role in succeeding the counseling activities carried out by Family Planning Counselors and/or Family Planning Field Officers.

4. Threats

External inhibiting factors for the effectiveness of digital communication in delivering messages to Generation Z, based on the results of the interview, found that there are still locations that do not support the application of digital communication in the Tanggamus Regency. This inhibits the goals of Family Planning Counselors in carrying out their main duties and functions.

Basically, the establishment of new media is a breakthrough in information communication activities to keep up with current developments. New media in the form of digital media is an answer and improvement for the weaknesses of previous conventional media. One of the strengths of digital media is the wider and faster reach of information access without space and time limitations. As time goes by, the users and those who access digital media are Generation Z, commonly known as Gen Z.

The Effectiveness of Digital Communication in Delivering Messages to Generation Z

According to Mardiasmo (2017), effectiveness is: "The measure of the success or failure of an organization is in achieving its goals. The indicators of effectiveness describe the range of consequences and impacts (outcome) of program output in achieving program goals." In this case, digital communication to Gen Z can be stated to be effective through various measures of the aspect of effectiveness as follows:

1. Aspects of Duties and Functions

An institution/organization is stated effective if its duties or functions have been carried out. Likewise, a breakthrough/innovation can be stated as effective if its duties or functions have been achieved. According to the results of interviews with informants, the application of digital media as the breakthrough of CIE is a thing that supports the main duties and functions of Family Planning Counselors and/or Family Planning Field Officers in carrying out CIE activities to the community and is considered more effective if the targets are Gen Z who are still teenagers.

2. Aspects of Planning or Program

The main point of this aspect is a programmed plan. If all plans can be carried out, then it can be considered effective. Likewise, the activities of Family Planning Counselor in applying digital communication as CIE media, starting from the planning process, organizing, finding targets, which in this case is Gen Z, finding credible reference sources, carrying out CIE activities through digital media to the monitoring and evaluation process of program achievements and technical activities carried out.

3. Aspects of Terms and Regulations

The effectiveness of a program can also be seen in whether the regulations that have been made function or not in order to maintain the ongoing process. If it is correlated with the

main duties and functions of the Family Planning Counselor in creating Digital CIE Media, there are also terms, regulations, and separate CIE technical strategies so that the goals of CIE can be implemented properly. For example, in designing properly and correctly, besides generating a good product, it also avoids plagiarism from other media, and the terms as effective strategies to carry out CIE through media are by considering the prime time of each media and CIE target.

4. **Aspects of Goals and Ideal Conditions**

A program is considered effective if the goals or ideal conditions of the program can be achieved. The existence of Digital CIE Media helps organizations/institutions achieve their goals, which are the main duties and functions of Family Planning Counselors. The ideal is carried out in targeting adolescents/Gen Z because digital communication is wrapped up in an attractive display, and its function is to answer the challenges of current development as a media that can cover a wide range of targets and is not limited by time.

Constraints of the Effectiveness of Digital Communication in Delivering Messages to Generation Z

There are constraints, obstacles, and/or threats in applying digital communication to deliver messages to Generation Z. The human resources of Family Planning Counselors and/or Family Planning Field Officers in Tanggamus Regency are not fully literate in the latest technology. Some of them still use conventional CIE media, which are not as sophisticated as digital media. The lack of device support is also one of the obstacles to this innovation because if one of the digital communication actors does not have adequate devices, it will reduce the effectiveness of digital communication. In the external factors, there are other obstacles, such as not all areas in Tanggamus Regency have been reached by adequate signal and internet network so in certain areas, CIE through digital media, as in this research innovation, is impossible to implement.

Another challenge is in the process of communication, where a communication activity is considered effective if there is feedback from the target. Therefore, it becomes a challenge for Family Planning Counselors and/or Family Planning Field Officers to facilitate two-way communication between communicator and recipient as best as possible so that what has been agreed as the goal of communication is not ambiguous and misinterpreted by the targets of communication.

Solutions to Overcome Constraints of the Effectiveness of Digital Communication in Delivering Messages to Generation Z

Solutions or efforts that can be carried out by the Family Planning Counselor and/or Family Planning Field Officers in Tanggamus Regency to overcome constraints of the effectiveness of digital communication in delivering messages to Generation Z are to continue to develop potentials, interests, and talents of existing human resources in developing and using information technology and existing facilities to innovate in digital media. Another effort is to involve related partners, such as the Planning Generation (GenRe) Forum, which is a peer counselor with Generation Z that can help optimize the effectiveness of digital communication.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study regarding the effectiveness of digital communication in delivering messages to Generation Z, which is carried out to Family Planning Counselors and/or Family Planning Field Officers in Tanggamus Regency, found that in this current digital era, an innovative breakthrough that can answer various opportunities and challenges of a Family Planning Counselor and/or Family Planning Field Officer in carrying out their duties and functions is required. As the years go by, the target of the Bangga Kencana program will be dominated by

teenagers called Generation Z. CIE is a counseling activity that must be carried out by a Family Planning Counselor and/or Family Planning Field Officer. Thus, digital communication is a key to answering opportunities and challenges that can be realized through Digital CIE Media. Based on the data sources and analysis carried out in this study, digital communication really helps the process of delivering messages to Gen Z, where its flexible characteristic without space and time limitations makes counseling activities by Family Planning Counselor and/or Family Planning Field Officer more effective. However, there are still weaknesses that must be fixed by the Human Resources of the Family Planning Counselor and/or Family Planning Field Officer in Tanggamus Regency.

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